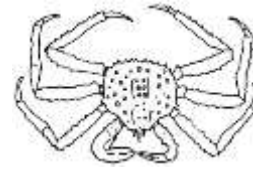

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Time: 1:45 p.m.

JUNEAU AREA PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Juneau. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced today that the personal use red and blue king crab fishing season in Section 11-A (Juneau area) will **not open in 2013**.

The department surveys the red king crab population in Section 11-A in late June and generates estimates of abundance of sexually mature crab, legal-sized crab, and post recruits, or crab that have been legal-size for more than one season. The 2013 estimates constitute a 7% increase in legal biomass and a 3% decrease in mature biomass from 2012. This is the third lowest legal biomass estimate and the lowest mature biomass for the past 23 years. Overall, stock status for the Juneau area has declined from below average in 2012, to poor in 2013.

From 2007 through 2011, the Section 11-A red king crab stock health, while below average, had improved based primarily on increases in survey catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of post-recruit males. These crabs were largely responsible for providing the small harvestable surpluses available in 2010 and 2011. Although there was an observed increase in legal male abundance in 2013, the decrease in mature crab indicates low recruitment into the fishery and that the aging post-recruit population cannot support a harvest at this time.

The 2013 survey results indicate that 86% of the estimated mature male biomass is currently legal-size. A similar pattern was observed during the 1980s when Section 11-A red king crab biomass estimates were at their lowest levels on record. The current size composition of the population indicates that there is little potential for recruitment into the legal-size class in the short term. A male red king crab becomes sexually mature at about 8 years of age and recruits into the legal population at 9-10 years of age.

As previously announced, the waters of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C are currently open to personal use fishing for red and blue king crab with a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab [5 AAC 77.664(b)]. Those waters outside of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C not listed as closed areas below, are also currently open to personal use fishing for red and blue king crab with a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].

As previously announced, the following areas will remain closed to fishing for red and blue king crab until further notice due to poor stock health:

Port Frederick, Peril Strait, Seymour Canal, Lynn Sisters, and Excursion Inlet will remain closed.

The Emergency Order corresponding to this announcement is EO 1C1613.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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